Claims

1.   A method of configuring an ATM address for a device coupled to an ATM network, including the step of selecting said ATM address to include

a first portion selected to equal a value unique to a class of said devices; and

a second portion of the ATM address comprising a switch number ID selected to equal a second portion unique value, wherein said second portion unique value is unique to the device.

2.   A method as in claim 1, wherein a default peer group ID is determined in response to said first portion, whereby devices from said class are by default configured in the same PNNI protocol peer group.

3.   A method as in claim 1, wherein said class of devices are those common to a manufacturer for said device, whereby devices from the same manufacturer are by default configured in the same PNNI protocol peer group.

4.   A method as in claim 1, wherein said method of configuring is applied to said device upon coupling said device to an ATM network.

5.   A method as in claim 1, wherein said first portion comprises a seven byte field.

6. A method as in claim 1, wherein said second portion comprises a six byte field.

7. A method as in claim 1, wherein said second portion unique value includes a MAC address for said device.

8. A method as in claim 1, wherein said step of selecting said ATM address includes selecting

a third portion of the ATM address comprising a device number ID selected to equal a third portion unique value; whereby a combination of said first portion, said second portion and said third portion is unique to said device.

9. A method as in claim 8, wherein said third portion unique value comprises a MAC address for said device.

10. A method as in claim 8, wherein said second portion unique value and said third portion unique value collectively include a MAC address for said device.